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ABSTRACT

This paper identifies the nature and extent of backlogs in OhioLINK libraries, how these backlogs are controlled and managed, and who has knowledge of what is contained in these backlogs. Using survey methodology, data were collected from the heads of cataloging and collection development departments of the OhioLINK libraries through questionnaires. The survey results reveal that backlogs exist in varying sizes in nearly all of the OhioLINK libraries. There seems to be little knowledge among the librarians about the content of the backlogs, and the availability of Library of Congress/OCLC copy is relied upon heavily by the libraries in making backlog decisions. Few of these libraries provide information to the user about the backlog in the public access catalogs, but there is almost unanimous agreement among catalogers and collection developers that such access should be made available. None of the libraries shelve backlogged materials in public access location for perusal or browsing. Overall, it appears there must be more and better communication between catalogers and collection developers to eliminate current backlogs and to prevent their future growth. General insights into the situation and recommendations for improvement are presented in the conclusion. The questionnaire and other survey materials are appended. (25 references) (Author/MAB)

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CATALOGING BACKLOGS: THEIR CONTENT AND CONTROL A SURVEY OF COLLECTION DEVELOPERS AND CATALOGERS IN OHIOLINK LIBRARIES

A Master's Research Paper submitted to the
Kent State University School of Library Science
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Library Science

by

Onadell J. Bly

May, 1991

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ABSTRACT

It is recognized that cataloging backlogs exist in some degree in most libraries. How these backlogs are controlled and managed in the initial seventeen OhioLINK libraries as a group is unknown. This paper attempts to establish not only the nature and extent of the backlogged titles in OhioLINK libraries, but also to determine how these backlogs are controlled and managed and to determine who has knowledge of what is contained in these backlogs as individual entities. Using survey methodology, data was collected from the heads of the cataloging and collection development departments of the OhioLINK libraries through questionnaires.

Results of the survey are described in detail. The summary reveals that backlogs exist in varying sizes in nearly all of the OhioLINK libraries. There seems to be little knowledge among the librarians about the content of the backlogs. Few of these libraries provide information to the user about the backlog in the public access catalogs, but there is nearly unanimous agreement among catalogers and collection developers that such access should be made available. None of the libraries shelve backlogged materials in public access locations for perusal or browsing. Overall, it appears there must be more and better communication between catalogers and collection developers to help eliminate current backlogs and to prevent their future growth. General insights into the situation and recommendations for improvement are presented in the conclusion.

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PREFACE

As the OhioLINK vision becomes a reality, the presence of existing backlogs in the participating libraries needs to be addressed. Will these backlogs present a stumbling block to the concept of shared resources and unnecessary expenditures for the academic libraries of Ohio? This study was undertaken to help reveal the extent of current backlogs and to determine if librarians have knowledge of and control over their uncataloged materials.

I. Introduction

Statement of the Problem and Need for the Study

Cataloging backlogs have been a matter of concern for many years. At this time in the development of the Ohio consortium of Academic Libraries called OhioLINK, it is important to discover (A) the extent of cataloging backlogs in these libraries, (B) the order of processing of new materials and, (C) which library personnel exercise control over the backlog content and the order in which backlogged materials are eventually processed.

If collection development personnel are responsible for timely and effective purchasing of library materials for support of the Universities' curricula, is it logical that they have input concerning cataloging priorities and cataloging backlogs? Does the library user have access to the backlogged titles? Is this access through the public catalog or only by inquiry to a librarian? Can the user retrieve titles identified as being located in the cataloging backlog? Is the decision to backlog a title made by librarians who can evaluate the need for a title in the collection and for support of current curricula, or is the decision made for librarians by online bibliographic databases which may not contain appropriate cataloging for the title?

Searches, both on-line and manual, in Library Literature, Library and Information Science Abstracts, ERIC, and Dissertation Abstracts, dating from 1980 through current

months revealed no studies or surveys concerning the content and management of cataloging backlogs. Several studies and surveys have been done to determine **why** backlogs exist and to determine **what** materials have been backlogged. No research has been done in this time span to determine if there is any effort made in any library to control the content of cataloging backlogs as they are created.

Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to determine:

1. if backlogs are a problem in OhioLINK libraries;
2. if catalogers and collection development librarians are familiar with these backlogs;
3. how backlogs are created and
4. if collection development librarians help determine the content of these backlogs;
5. if the user has access to the backlogged materials;
6. how titles are removed from the backlog for cataloging.

Limitations of the Study

Participants in this study were limited to the seventeen state supported and other academic libraries in Ohio forming the consortium called OhioLINK. The survey was sent to Collection Development Heads and Cataloging Department Heads in these libraries. The survey was not sent to reference personnel, who in many cases are responsible for selection and development in conjunction with collection developers,

unless the Reference Department was defined by the library as the department totally responsible for collection development.

II. Literature Review

Cataloging backlogs have been a serious matter of concern for nearly fifty years. This is verified by the appointment of a Librarian's Committee by Archibald MacLeish, Librarian of Congress, in 1940. The Committee's goal was to analyze the cataloging process then in place in the Library of Congress and "devise a way of getting its processing work done without falling deeper and deeper into arrears."[1] It is interesting to note that one of the major recommendations made by the Committee was the creation of simplified cataloging rules which would result in brief records for many titles.[2] In the recent literature which discusses the reasons for cataloging backlogs, one of the primary reasons given is the complicated rules and technical knowledge required to catalog an item in today's automated library world.[3]

Dozens of articles and several books have been written in the last ten years which demonstrate the problem presented to today's academic library by cataloging

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[1]Martha M. Yee, "Attempts to Deal with the 'Crisis in Cataloging" at the Library of Congress in the 1940s," The Library Quarterly 57 (January 1987): 2, citing Andrew D. Osborn, "Summary of Proceedings," The Code and the Cataloguer Colloquium on the Anglo-American Cataloging Rules, 1967 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), 98.

[2]Ibid., 7.

[3]Sheila S. Intner, "Bibliographic Triage," Technicalities 7, no. 12 (December 1987): 10.

backlogs. Reliable proof that backlogs are a problem can be found in SPEC Kit,136 entitled "Managing Copy Cataloging in ARL Libraries." The researchers state that "of greatest interest ... is the fact that only three of the nineteen ARL libraries indicated that backlogs of uncataloged materials were **not** a problem."[4] Donald Share explored his library's approach to examining the backlog and explained the reorganization of the cataloging department which was implemented to decrease the growth of the backlog.[5] The University of Wyoming Library undertook a study of a year's worth of its cataloging backlog, testing the contents of backlogs to see what kinds of materials are most commonly left uncataloged. Several variables were established which disclosed the following results. It was discovered that backlogged materials most commonly fell into three subject categories: language and literature, fine and applied arts, and history; scientific and technical publications formed a surprisingly low percentage of the backlogged collection. Foreign publishers were more likely to be backlogged than domestic, and of these, firm order materials were more likely to be backlogged than approval plan materials.[6] Waiting for Library of Congress or

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[4]"Managing Copy Cataloging in ARL Libraries," SPEC Kit 137 (July-August 1987) (Washington, D.C.: Association of Research Libraries, Office of Management Studies), preliminary page, unnumbered.

[5]Donald Share, "Management of Backlogs," Library Journal 111, no. 4 (September 1, 1986): 160-161.

[6]Carol White and Tedine Roos, "Sampling the Cataloging Backlog: The University of Wyoming Library's Experience," Technical Services Quarterly 6, no. 1 (1988): 11-22.

member library cataloging to appear on a bibliographic utility was discussed by Share.[7] He contended that cooperative cataloging contributes to the backlog problem.[8] Many reasons for backlogs were cited by Intner: the information explosion, the diversity and complexity of materials being published, the added complexity due to the switch to technology, and others.[9] Minimal level cataloging, a popular, but certainly not new approach to the problem is reviewed by Karen L. Horny. She states:

> A frequently cited impetus for implementing an MLC plan is a desire to provide access to backlogs of unprocessed material when suitable copy is not available and there is no prospect of obtaining sufficient staff to do full cataloging. Another justification sometimes offered for MLC is that certain kinds of materials may not require or even be worth the time and effort involved in creating a full bibliographic record.[10]

The arguments, pro and con, on the subject of minimal level cataloging are reviewed in a series of brief articles by various librarians who took part in the "symposium" reviewed by Horny.

There have been no articles written or surveys done which have been dedicated to the issue of who is responsible for what materials are backlogged. Sheila Intner

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[7]Donald S. Share, "Waiting for Cataloging," Technical Services Quarterly 4, no. 1 (Fall 1986): 19-23.

[8]Ibid., 19.

[9]Sheila S. Intner, "Bibliographic Triage," Technicalities 7, no. 12 (December 1987): 10.

[10]Karen L. Horny, "Minimal-Level Cataloging: A Look at the Issues--A Symposium," The Journal of Academic Librarianship 11, no. 6 (January 1986): 332.

comes closest to involving departments other than cataloging who should be included when discussing the backlog problem:

> If collection developers in a library refuse to limit their acquisitions to easily cataloged materials, it seems to me they have an obligation to enter the fray and help the catalog manager decide how to handle items that require costly, time-consuming editing, or still worse, original cataloging. A catalog department cannot bear alone the inevitable squeeze to lower unit costs [and deliver materials to the library's shelves in a timely manner] while simultaneously cataloging unusual and complicated materials.[11]

Ocran, in her recently completed research, examined the extent of backlogs in a sample of Ohio academic and public libraries. Her results indicated that 68.3 percent of the responding academic libraries had backlogs.[12] She observed that "inadequate cataloging staff, coupled with increased acquisition, seems to be the major cause of most of the backlogs."[13] Ocran's research and results are enlightening and helpful in ascertaining the existence of a backlog problem in selected Ohio academic and public libraries. However, the questions of content, accessibility, and dispersion are not addressed. There is no indication of the extent of the problem in OhioLINK libraries.

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[11]Sheila S. Intner, "Bibliographic Triage Revisited," Technicalities 8, no. 10 (October 1988): 3.

[12]Adelaide F. Ocran, "Cataloging Backlog in Academic and Public Libraries: the Case of Ohio" (M.L.S. research paper, Kent State University, 1990): 18.

[13]Ibid., 24.

III. Procedure

Methodology and Population Sample

The survey method for collecting data was used. The survey was descriptive in nature. The population chosen consisted of the seventeen Ohio academic libraries which have organized to create the library consortium called OhioLINK (see Appendix D). This population, though limited, was a manageable size and would illustrate the degree of the backlog problem in the academic libraries whose goal it will be to co-operate in buying, cataloging, circulating, and storing library materials.

The survey was performed through as a written questionnaire rather than as an oral interview. This approach was deemed more likely to produce specific responses from the population. While oral interviews would have proven interesting, and perhaps more productive in obtaining responses, local conflicts and departmental biases were conceived by the researcher as possible interference which might influence the outcome. The questionnaire was pretested by cataloging and collection development personnel in libraries not included in the survey. The selected librarians were experienced and knowledgeable employees at their respective institutions; they had dealt with the backlog problem in their current positions as well as in other institutions.

A total of thirty-four questionnaires were sent, two to each of the OhioLINK libraries. One was addressed to the Head of the Cataloging Department and the other

to the Head of the Collection Development Department (or its closest counterpart). Names and addresses were obtained from the American Library Directory and by telephone calls to particular libraries. Each recipient was asked not to discuss the questionnaire with the colleague who received the same packet. Clearly, discussion between the two department heads involved at each library would affect the responses and, thus, the results of the survey. A cover letter, which introduced the surveyor (her qualifications, objectives, and goals for the survey) and a list of Definition of Terms (see Appendix E) accompanied each questionnaire.

The questionnaire consisted of thirty questions: fifteen were multiple choice in nature, seven were true/false statements to describe the situation within the library, and eight were dichotomous to gather opinion on backlog questions. A follow-up questionnaire, List of Definitions, and a modified cover letter were sent to those librarians who did not respond to the first questionnaire within three weeks. The cover letters and questionnaire are included in Appendix A, B, and C respectively.

Method of Analysis

Since the population was small and the response rate varied so greatly between the two groups of librarians surveyed, data was examined using text and tables. The two sets of questionnaires were analyzed separately and a comparative analysis was made. In addition, written comments from the respondents are cited when applicable and in some cases expanded upon by the surveyor. Because of the small sample and the response rate, no general conclusions could be accurately drawn.

IV. Results

The survey did not attempt to evaluate or compare the sizes of the libraries surveyed in relationship to the sizes of the backlogs reported. The surveyor assumed that some libraries would have small or no backlogs of uncataloged materials while others would have uncataloged collections numbering in the thousands, and that none of these backlogs would necessarily be relevant to the sizes of the libraries' cataloged collections. This was an intentional oversight resulting from the realization that the outcome of the survey would have implications for OhioLINK and its seventeen member libraries as a whole, and not for singular institutions. This assumption was justified by Ocran. She states, "The findings suggest that size of library has little to do with the presence of backlog, and that backlog is created by factors other than volume of collection."[14] Nor were the sizes of the staffs in the cataloging departments considered. When visualizing a consortium such as OhioLINK will be, with shared access, shared resources, and shared acquisitions, shared cataloging responsibilities may not be out of the question. Hence, it may not be unrealistic to anticipate shared work efforts to catalog and make available to the OhioLINK users those materials currently residing in backlogs at various libraries.

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[14]Ocran, [i].

Of the thirty-four surveys which were mailed, a total of fifteen surveys (88.23 percent) were returned by cataloging department heads and twelve surveys (70.58 percent) were returned by collection development department heads, or their representatives, for a total response rate of 79.4 percent. Two libraries were found guilty of sharing responses; parts of the survey were photocopied or responses were altered to match those of the colleague from the same institution. In both of these instances, the photocopied or altered questionnaires, or portions thereof, were eliminated from the response pool. This necessitated the removal of one response from each department's pool of responses. The librarians from a third library returned blank questionnaires stating that time did not permit them to complete the survey. As a result of these invalid and incomplete responses, the response total dropped to thirteen (76.46 percent) for cataloging and ten (58.8 percent) for collection development. Organizational peculiarities at two other libraries lowered the response rate further: the positions of Head of Cataloging and Head of Collection Development are merged into the same professional responsibility at these libraries. These respondents clearly indicated on their questionnaires from which aspect they were responding: cataloging or collection development. This dilemma resulted in decreasing the response rate by one more for each department: twelve (70.58 percent) for cataloging and nine (52.9 percent) for collection development. Completed, valid questionnaires were returned by both departments heads from six (35.3 percent) of the OhioLINK libraries. Responses from both librarians were received from five other libraries, but these included two questionnaies which were

partially invalid, two which represented both positions, and one blank set. Including these with the six sets of completed questionnaires, eleven (64.7 percent) of the OhioLINK libraries were totally represented in the response pool. Of the remaining six libraries, one had no responses returned and the others were represented by four catalogers and one collection developer.

It is recognized that a response rate of less than 60 percent is not considered valid for research purposes. However, those collection developers who did respond provided information that is well worth reporting even though it must be considered insufficient for true statistical and representative research.

The first portion of the questionnaire consisted of multiple choice questions designed to determine two things. First, do librarians know what materials are contained in their backlog collections and the nature of these materials? Second, how is the backlog controlled and accessed?

In the report of compared responses that follows, it must be remembered that there is no correlation of replies from catalogers and collection developers within libraries. No effort was made to compare the responses of two librarians within a single institution. The comparisons that follow provide only an insight into the general perceptions and beliefs of catalogers as a group and collection developers as a group.

To determine how much catalogers and collection developers know about their backlogs, it was necessary to determine how much they know about patterns of acquisition in their libraries. Respondents were asked to check the means by which materials are acquired by their libraries and, if possible, to estimate the percentage of

total acquisitions each method represents. Of the responding catalogers, only 50 percent quantified types of acquisition by citing percentages. Of the responding collection developers, 66.6 percent were willing to offer percentages of acquisition types. Both groups agreed that the largest percentage of receipts resulted from firm orders and smallest percentage of receipts resulted from gifts. Table 1 illustrates the maximum, median, and minimum percentages of types of receipts as reported by those librarians who provided percentages. Of the catalogers, 91.6 percent reported that their libraries were partial depositories for United States Government Documents and 81.8 percent of these respondents stated that GPO publications were represented in their public access catalogs. All collection developers reported that their libraries were partial depositories, and of these, 66.6 percent said that the documents were represented in the public access catalog.

TABLE 1

Maximum, median, and minimum percentages of type of acquisitions as reported by 6 catalogers and 5 collection developers.

	Firm Orders	Gifts	Approval Plan	Membership SO	Exchange
Catalogers:					
Maximum	80%	25%	75%	25%	0%
Median	42.5%	5%	40%	9%	15%
Minimum	20%	1%	5%	4%	0%
Collection Developers:					
Maximum	60%	5%	70%	35%	0%
Median	45%	2%	8%	20%	15%
Minimum	15%	.5%	2%	5%	0%

Related to the first question was a later question which asked the librarians to indicate which type of receipts were most likely to be backlogged. Again, percentages were requested if the librarian were willing to make an estimate. Only 16.6 percent responding catalogers were able to provide percentages and only 11.1 percent collection developers were willing to venture an estimate. Gift materials were indicated as the most likely candidates for backlogging by both groups of librarians (see table 2). It is interesting to note that among the total catalogers' responses, firm orders were cited as the second most likely type of receipt to be backlogged. In contrast to the catalogers' responses, none of the collection developers reported that firm orders were likely to be backlogged. Thenty-five percent of the catalogers remarked that all receipt types have an equal chance of being backlogged. This fact may be related to a dependency of catalogers on the Library of Congress and OCLC for bibliographic copy. This issue will be discussed later.

TABLE 2

Receipt types and the number of librarians who believe which types of receipts are likely to be backlogged. "Other" was defined as "all types have an equal chance of being backlogged."

	Catalogers	Collection Developers
Receipt type:		
Gifts	6	3
Firm orders	3	0
Other	3	1
Approval plan	2	1
Memberships/SO's	2	0
Exchange	1	0
Not Applicable		1

A slightly different approach was taken to the same question and the librarians were asked to indicate what formats (audio-visual, computer software) and types of materials (USGPO, serials, foreign language) were most likely to be backlogged. Of the responding catalogers, 41.6 percent said foreign language materials were the most likely be backlogged; 44 percent of the collection developers were in agreement. All other formats and types were cited by only one or two librarians from each group as likely candidates for backlog. The overwhelming number of responses by both groups of librarians indicated that foreign language materials had the highest probability of not receiving immediate cataloging. One cataloger made an interesting distinction between foreign language publications and foreign imprints. This distinction conforms with the University of Wyoming study which indicated that the language of the publication did not affect availability of cataloging copy as much as the country of publication did.

The questionnaire continued with questions concerning the size and age of the backlog. Size ranges were indicated according to the following increments: 100-500, 500-1000, 1000-2000, 2000-5000, 5000+. Backlogs of 100-500 titles were reported by 25 percent of the catalogers and 44 percent of the collection developers. Backlogs of 500-1000 titles were reported by 16.6 percent of the catalogers, as were backlogs of 1000-2000 titles. Twenty-five percent of the catalogers and 11.1 percent of the collection developers claimed backlogs of 2000-5000 titles. Backlogs in excess of 5,000 titles were reported by 16.6 percent of the catalogers and 22.2 percent of the collection developers. On the extreme ends of the spectrum, one collection developer

stated that the cataloging backlog exceeded 100,000 titles while another collection developer reported that there was no backlog. A cataloger, who cited a backlog of 100-500 titles, stated that in reality there was no backlog of uncataloged materials; peak receipt periods were balanced by low receipt periods and the catalogers were always able to catch up with any small pockets of backlog that might develop. Another librarian noted that the library has no recognized backlog; there are collections which have been purchased or given to the library over the years, but there is no intention of ever cataloging these materials.

TABLE 3

Sizes and ages of backlogs as reported by
12 catalogers and 9 collection developers.

	Catalogers	Collection Developers
Size of backlog:		
No backlog		11.1%
100-500	25.0%	44.4%
500-1000	16.6%	0
1000-2000	16.6%	0
2000-5000	25.0%	11.1%
5000+	16.6%	33.3%
Age of backlog:		
Majority post 1985	58.3%	44.4%
Majority pre-1985	16.6%	33.3%
No age predominant	16.6%	11.1%
Don't know	8.3%	0

The next question was intended to determine if the librarians are aware of the age of the materials in their backlogs. They were asked to indicate if the majority of the materials in the backlogs have imprints of 1985 or later, imprints pre-dating 1985, or if there was no predominance of age. Of the catalogers, fifty-eight percent described their backlogs as primarily post-1985 materials; 16.6 percent their backlogs contained a majority of pre-1985 materials; another 16.6 percent said there was no predominance of older versus newer imprints; one confessed to having no idea what the age make-up of the backlog is. On the other hand, 50 percent of the collection developers said their backlogs were post-1985, 37.5 percent reported pre-1985, and one did not know the age breakdown of the backlog (see table 3). Fifty percent of the catalogers and 62.5 percent of the collection developers indicated that their responses concerning the ages of their backlogs were based on an educated guess. The remaining librarians from both groups based their responses on their knowledge of their backlogs.

Librarians were asked if there was a written policy listing types of receipts or formats which should never be backlogged. Twenty-five percent of the respondents from both groups said such a written policy existed in their libraries. Unwritten policies covering priority cataloging were reported by 58.3 percent of the catalogers and 62.5 percent of the collection developers. These materials were identified by both groups, in order of frequency, as rushes, reference materials, serials, computer software, and audio-visual materials. One collection developer believed that monographic standing order receipts were also included on this list of materials to receive immediate

cataloging. Only one cataloger identified a particular subject area which received priority treatment by catalogers.

Beyond materials recognized on the priority lists, the librarians were asked to indicate who or what guidelines determined which titles would be backlogged. Choices supplied were catalogers, collection developers, LC/OCLC, and other. Five librarians from each group indicated multiple possibilities. Twenty-five percent of the catalogers reported that the backlog decision was based entirely LC/OCLC copy availability; only one collection developer believed this to be the case. Both the cataloger and LC/OCLC were cited as the decision-amkers by 16.6 percent of the catalogers and by 28.6 percent collection developers. Collection developers and LC/OCLC were the decision-makers according to 8.3 percent of the catalogers; none of the responding collection developers reported this option as the process used. One cataloger said that a title was backlogged based on a joint decision between cataloging and collection development; again, none of the collection developers indicated that this process was used. According to 42.8 percent of the collection developers, the backlog decision involved catalogers, collection developers, and LC/OCLC; none of the catalogers reported this three-way decision-making process. One cataloger reported a complicated process which included determining the number of references in bibliographic tools. Three catalogers did not indicate any formal decision-making process for backlogging titles; they explained that materials are cataloged on a first come/first cataloged basis. It is unclear if the conclusion to be drawn from this statement should be that no titles are backlogged, or if it should be

concluded that, once again, the lack of appropriate LC/OCLC copy determines that titles will be backlogged. A fourth cataloger explained that no materials are backlogged unless they require original cataloging or there are questionable bibliographic records. However, the indication is that the decision to backlog rests upon LC/OCLC copy. The availability of LC/OCLC copy was by far the ruling determinant: 83.3 percent of the catalogers indicated that the lack of availability of copy in LC/OCLC was at least part of the consideration when backlogging decisions were made; 85.7 percent of the collection developers indicated that the absence of appropriate LC/OCLC copy could make a title a candidate for backlogging, with the exception of pre-identified priority materials.

The results indicated in table 4 verify Share's belief that bibliographic databases and the tendency of catalogers to rely upon them for copy has had a great influence on the development of cataloging backlogs.[15]

Perhaps more important than the creation of the backlog is its maintenance. Where is the backlogged housed? How accessible are the titles in the backlog to the library user? The cataloging department was reported as the sole storage location for the backlog by 58.3 percent of the catalogers by 57.1 percent of the collection developers. A closed stack area in another location in the library was cited at the location of the backlog by 16.6 percent of the catalogers and 14.2

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[15]Share, "Waiting for Cataloging," 20.

TABLE 4

Combination of decision-making factors used to determine backlogging as reported by 12 catalogers and 7 collection developers

Backlog decision made by:	Catalogers	Collection Developers
LC/OCLC only	3	1
Joint: Cataloging and OCLC	2	2
Joint: Coll Dev and OCLC	1	0
Joint: Cataloging and Coll Dev	1	0
Collection Dev only	1	1
Cataloging, OCLC, & Coll Dev	0	3
No formal process	4	0

percent of the collection developers. Multiple storage locations were indicated by 16.6 percent of the catalogers and 28.5 percent of the collection developers, including off-campus cites. No librarians reported that the backlogs were shelved in a public access area for user perusal.

Since users are unable to access the physical backlog, the question of accessibility to the user becomes vital. How many libraries enter their backlogged materials, in the form of brief listed titles, in the public access catalog? The majority of librarians reported that backlogged titles are not listed in the public catalog: 75 percent of the catalogers and 33.3 percent of the collection developers. Of the collection developers, 44.4 percent indicated titles were listed in the public access catalog on a selective basis. Only 25 percent of the catalogers and 22.2 percent of the collection developers indicated that backlogged titles were definitely listed in the

public access catalog, and one of these was qualified as "theoretically" by a cataloger. Table 5 shows the availability of information level for backlogged materials.

TABLE 5

Brief listed entries in public catalogs for backlogged titles as reported by 12 catalogers and 7 collection developers.

	Backlogged titles in public catalog?		
	YES	NO	Selectively
Catalogers	3	9	0
Collection Developers	2	3	2

The prevalence of online catalogs and the growing number of integrated acquisitions subsystems accounts for the number of responses in the "selectively" column by collection developers. These librarians explained their responses stating that new orders placed by Acquisitions appear in the online catalogs.

It is clear that several of the OhioLINK libraries are successful at maintaining relatively small cataloging backlogs. Others are operating with large backlogs and continue to add to them. A list of methods for attacking backlogs was cited in the questionnaire and librarians were asked to indicate which approaches were taken in their libraries to catalog backlogged materials. The number of titles removed from the backlog by each method is unknown, but it is interesting to note that the majority of catalogers and collection developers cited "user request" most frequently as the reason for retrieving titles from the backlog and cataloging them. Seventy-five percent of the catalogers and 62.5 percent of the collection developers cited "user request" as

at least one the methods used in cataloging backlogged materials. As defined in the "List of Definitions" in Appendix E, "user" is anyone in the library target group; collection developers are included in this group. As a result, it is unknown if the "user requests" indicated by the librarians are university faculty, university students, "other" community users, or collection developers. "A scheduled recycle through OCLC" and "first-in/first-out" were reported by 33.3 percent of the catalogers and 37.5 percent of the collection developers as the next most frequently used methods in attacking the backlog. Table 6 illustrates the variety of approaches taken by libraries in cataloging backlogged materials. The close relationship of the numbers reported by catalogers and collection developers indicates that the two groups of librarians are in close agreement and understanding about how cataloging from the backlogs is accomplished.

TABLE 6

Methods/reasons for cataloging backlogged titles
as reported by 12 catalogers and 8 collection managers.

Criteria for cataloging:	Catalogers	Collection Developers
User Request	8	5
First-in/first-out	4	3
Scheduled recycle through OCLC	4	3
Other (grants, special projects, etc.)	1	1
Imprint	1	1
Language	0	1
Last-in/first-out	0	0

The true/false section of the questionnaire was designed to collect firm opinions and beliefs from the librarians concerning the backlog situations in their libraries. Though there were only seven questions in this portion of the survey, their design was intended to determine the level of confidence, communication, and understanding that exists between cataloging and collection development departments. Again, it must be emphasized that there is no direct correlation between catalogers' and collection developers' responses, since each group represents an undefined set of responses from each library for each department. Also, though this was not the intent of the survey, information provided by some of the responses gives some insight into what might be expected when the OhioLINK database is completed.

The first statement was: Catalogers can be relied upon to determine which materials should receive priority cataloging and which can be backlogged. Sixty-six percent of the librarians from both groups indicated that catalogers can be relied upon to make appropriate decisions concerning backlogging of materials.

Of the catalogers and collection developers, 30.76 percent and 44.4 percent, respectively, indicated that minimal level cataloging was used by their libraries as an alternative to full cataloging for selected titles. The "selected" titles were not defined.

The majority of librarians in both groups indicated that the backlogs in their libraries are well-organized and that titles are easily retrieved from these collections. Only one cataloger from the 13 who responded to this question admitted to a backlog which is not entirely well-organized; 33.3 percent of the collection developers believed the backlogs were not well-organized. All of the catalogers said materials are easily

retrieved; 22.2 percent of the collection developers believed materials are not easily retrieved from the backlog.

A statement which received a response of "True" from 84.6 percent of the catalogers and 77.7 percent of the collection developers was, "Generally, the cataloging backlog does not create a problem for library users." Reviewing Table 5, it can be seen that 9 catalogers and 3 collection developers responded that backlogged titles are not brief listed in the public access catalog. Yet this true/false statement was only perceived as false by only 4 librarians, 2 from each group. It seems highly inconsistent and highly unlikely that backlogs do not present a problem to the library user. Do librarians believe that lack of access is not a problem? It is possible that the word "problem" needs to be defined.

The greatest disagreement between catalogers and collection developers arose in response to the statement, "No title remains in the backlog for more than one year." Of the 13 responses from catalogers, 46.1 indicated this statement was "true;" the remaining 53.9 percent said it was "false." In sharp contrast, one collection developer believed the statement to be true, while 88.8 percent believed it to be false. Given the response rate to and the method of comparison of responses in this survey, it is possible that the 7 collection developers represent the same libraries as the 7 catalogers. It is also possible, however, that collection developers do not perceive the flow of materials into and out of the backlog to be as smooth as catalogers do.

The final true/false statement was inspired by Sheila Intner.[16] "The cataloging backlog is so large that it must be accepted that some titles may never be cataloged." Do OhioLINK librarians believe this? Only 15.3 percent of the responding catalogers indicated this statement to be true, while 33.3 percent of the responding collection developers agreed with the statement.

Librarians were asked to agree or disagree with the final set of eight statements. Some of the statements allowed for personal philosophical interpretations on practices which may already be in place in some libraries. There was no effort made, however, to pair the responses of given individuals to determine if Cataloger A and Collection Developer B agreed with the procedures previously indicated in the questionnaire.

Four of the statements directly addressed the involvement of collection developers in the cataloging/backlogging process. The majority of librarians disagreed with the first of these which stated, "Collection developers should evaluate the likelihood that materials will be cataloged before they order them, based on their knowledge of the existing backlog." Of the responding catalogers, 53.8 percent disagreed and 55.5 percent of the collection developers disagreed. Only one collection developer agreed with the statement, one said it was not applicable, and two could not decide if this kind of evaluation was necessary. Attempting to interpret the meaning of these responses is a questionable undertaking, but it would seem that collection developers believe their evaluations of what is needed in the library to support the academic curricula should not be hindered by having to consider what the

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[16]Intner, "Bibliographic Triage,"

catalogers have not cataloged. The fact that 46 percent of the responding catalogers agreed with this statement could be interpreted as a condition of frustration among some catalogers in having to deal with particular subject areas or types of materials: to have collection managers continue to order materials which already represent a problem to catalogers may be interpreted as adding insult to injury. This feeling was definitely expressed by one cataloger.

To continue the thought, respondents were asked if collection developers should re-evaluate a title which has been backlogged before original cataloging is performed. Re-evaluation was deemed a good idea by 53.8 percent of the respondents representing cataloging. Sixty percent of the responding collection developers agreed with the idea. Next, the librarians were asked to agree or disagree with this statement: "If a collection developer assigns very low cataloging priority to a title, it is an indication that the title should not have been purchased/kept in the first place." Of the responding catalogers only 33 percent agreed with the statement. In close accord, 20 percent of the responding collection developers agreed with the statement. This seems to indicate that, although some titles may not be of the utmost importance to the collection, they should not be eliminated from the possibility of being added to the collection at some future date in time.

Finally, when asked if a large backlog could inhibit the capability of a collection developer in making appropriate selections for new purchases, 76.9 percent of the catalogers agreed that the capability to select appropriately could be impaired. Only 33.3 percent collection developers believed that a large backlog could affect their

abilities to make appropriate selections for new purchases. The collection developers' responses to this statement reinforce the contention of the first question in this set. They seem not to believe that the possible contents of the cataloging backlog should have any influence over their decisions to purchase materials they believe will support and enhance the libraries' collections and the curricula of the universities.

The next three questions in the final set concerned brief listing of backlogged titles in the public catalog. Of the responding catalogers 76.9 percent and 100 percent of the collection developers agreed that all backlogged titles should be brief listed in the public access catalog. Of the titles brief listed in the public catalog, only 30.7 percent of the catalogers agreed that only those requested by users should receive full cataloging. Collection developers disagreed 100 percent with the idea that only requested brief listed titles should receive full cataloging. In conjunction with the previous statement, librarians were asked to agree or disagree with the following statement: "If a backlogged title can be identified and retrieved from the backlog, it does not matter that it may never be cataloged." Only 13 percent of the 23 librarians agreed with this statement: 2 catalogers and one collection developer. One collection developer was undecided.

What is the goal of cataloging? Of the responding catalogers, 61.5 percent agreed with the statement: "the goal of cataloging should be to catalog as many titles as possible, regardless of what will be backlogged." Of the responding collection developers 44.4 percent agreed that the goal of cataloging should be to catalog as many titles as possible, regardless of what would have to be backlogged. Again,

there was one collection developer who was undecided. A comment by one cataloger provides food for thought: "That kind of philosophy is what got us into the mess we're in today. The backlog is full of valuable, needed materials which will each take hours to catalog. If we had done them as they were received, the easy things would have slipped in through the cracks."

VI. Summary and Conclusions

As stated earlier, catalogers and collection developers know how library materials arrive in their libraries; some even have a good idea how much comes in through the various methods of acquisitions. Generally, they are aware of existing backlogs in terms of quantity, but they seem to have little concept of the make-up of the backlogs. Numbers were not intended to be an issue in this survey. Percentages were emphasized in some areas to determine if catalogers and collection developers knew what kinds of acquisitions and materials were in their backlogs. The fact that only three librarians were able to venture an estimate on the percentages of types materials in their backlogs is not surprising. The very nature of backlogs and the guidelines currently in use by most libraries that govern the addition of materials to the backlogs must result in a collection of varied materials from varied acquisitions sources.

If all cataloging departments were able to report backlogs of only a few hundred titles, there would be no crisis in the situation. According to the numbers reported by catalogers, however, at least seven OhioLINK libraries have backlogs in excess of 1,000 titles; two of these have backlogs exceeding 5,000 titles and, adding in the number provided by one collection developer, one of these has over 100,000 titles backlogged. There are at least two, and possibly three, libraries who will bring to

OhioLINK large collections of uncataloged materials. What are the implications of this situation? More information on the nature and content of these backlogs is needed. From the figures reported, the total number of titles backlogged in the OhioLINK libraries could range in number from 114,300 to 127,500. Undoubtedly the number is in reality even higher, since acquired collections exist which are not even considered to be "backlog" by the libraries owning them.

What is represented in this cumulative collection of backlogged materials? While it is difficult to draw firm conclusions from the the earlier analysis, it appears that, while the reporting librarians know the method of acquisition of their collections, they are not very positive about the quantities which are received by each method. Even less certain are they about what kinds of materials, either acquisition type or format, make up the backlogs which are present in their libraries. It would be interesting to discover if the belief that foreign language materials are the most likely materials to be backlogged, or if these librarians would discover, as the University of Wyoming did, that other English language subject areas make up the biggest part of the backlog.[17] Most libraries claim to have well-organized backlogs, but this only means that backlogged materials can be identified on a title by title basis, as inquiries arise. There is little depth perception of the contents of the backlogs. It seems, in spite of the beliefs of collection developers, such large reservoirs of unidentified materials would have to affect the ability of collection developers to make appropriate decisions concerning what new materials need to be purchased. Even more, their ability to

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[17]White and Roos, 11-22.

determine which areas of the libraries' collections need to be enhanced must be diminished by large collections of unidentified materials.

Two characteristics of the backlogs reported by catalogers are matters for concern. First, at least 50 percent of the responding catalogers reported that firm orders were as likely, if not more likely, to be backlogged than all other types of receipts, except for gifts. Since the firm order is a specific request for a given title to be added to the library's collection, can the assumption be made that library users are not getting, in a timely manner, the materials which collection developers believe are of primary importance to the library's collection? Second, 58.3 percent of the responding catalogers reported that over half of their backlogs were materials with imprints of 1985 through 1991. This indicates one of two possibilities. Either materials are removed from the backlogs based on their ages and, as a result, the backlog collections maintain a static age, or the backlog problem has increased in the last five years and catalogers are unable to keep up with receipts. In either case, the backlogged materials are not only relatively current, and in many cases quickly losing their value, but many of them are also the result of firm orders. These facts indicate the importance of catalogers and collection developers working together more closely to determine what should be cataloged now and what can wait a month, a year, or even a decade. Perhaps the organizational structure reported by two libraries responding to this survey should be investigated by more libraries: the positions of cataloging and collection development department heads are combined into one position. With such a position, the cataloging department would be more aware of its

responsibility to the library target group and the collection development department would be more aware of the problems confronted by cataloging. It is apparent that the backlog problem will never be conquered in many libraries; an organizational change such as this could help assure appropriate control of the backlog.

Titles should not be backlogged as a matter of "convenience." That is to say, the current trend in depending on OCLC/LC to provide cataloging must be examined more closely. Backlogs should be the result of decision-making and serious consideration on the parts of collection developers and catalogers. If a title is not immediately important to the collection, then waiting for copy is an acceptable decision, but this should be the only reason titles are backlogged because of lack of appropriate copy in OCLC/LC.

Since most of the responding librarians were unable (or at least unwilling) to estimate to percentage of types of receipt or formats in their backlogs, it would be helpful if backlogs could be roughly organized by subject (the departmental fund that paid for the book), by discipline (the college which supports the subject area), or by "collection developer" responsibility. This sort of arrangement would permit visual appraisal of any section of the backlog and would help both the catalogers and the collection developers appraise the backlog situation in a more realistic manner. Existing backlogs ranging in sizes from 5,000 to 100,000 or more titles would be difficult to arrange in such an order, but to begin such an organization now would eliminate further confusion. Space for such an arrangement might be a problem in many libraries. Other sorting devices might be employed if space were a problem.

For example, if backlogged titles are brieflisted in the public access online catalog, a "subject" field could be added to each of these records indicating the fund (or general subject) and perhaps the format of the backlogged title. The resulting subject entry might look like this: Backlog history videocassette. A subject search on the entry "backlog history" would then retrieve all the history titles backlogged and the formats of these titles. Consistency in the order of the information, fund (subject) information and the format types cited, would be essential, but not difficult to establish.

Also, it is important that collection developers take a serious look at those materials which have been backlogged for long periods of time. Realistic assessments must be made of those titles which have been in backlogs for more than a year to determine if they are still needed in the collection. The majority of responding catalogers and collection developers agreed that this type of re-evaluation would be beneficial before original cataloging is done. Why not make a serious effort to re-evaluate these backlogged collections before catalogers retrieve materials for cataloging? Such a practice could possibly have two positive results: (1) Catalogers might be more willing to tackle the "problem" title if they knew it was going to be a valuable and useful addition to the library's collection and (2) collection developers and the rest of the library users might be more apt to find what they need on the library shelves instead of in the cataloging backlog. If a title is no longer of value, now is the time to recognize that fact. The storage of backlogged materials is costly in many different ways. To discard unneeded materials from the backlog makes just as much sense, for the same reasons, as weeding the cataloged collection.

Collection developers and acquisitions personnel must realize that to continue to buy new materials and accept gifts which will all be sent to cataloging departments which are already, in many cases, months or years behind in cataloging, will not enhance the libraries' collections or strengthen the curricula. Since many libraries are not in the position to hire additional full-time or part-time catalogers, collection developers and acquisitions personnel must step in and assist in rectifying the situation. One solution to the cataloging problem might be to assign librarians from collection development and acquisitions on a part-time basis to the cataloging department. Collection developers, usually degreed librarians, might be able to select important materials from the backlog which are in their areas of responsibility and catalog these materials, or at least do some preliminary work to partially prepare materials for original cataloging. Pre-order searchers from acquisitions should be capable of doing copy cataloging; this would free copy catalogers who would then be available to work on those materials with questionable copy or perhaps even do minimal level cataloging on selected materials which are deemed appropriate for that level of representation in the public access catalog.

The nearly unanimous agreement from the responding librarians concerning brief listing backlogged titles in the public access catalog confirms the need for this action. If the recommendations in the previous paragraph are not deemed feasible by some librarians (and there are many arguments which might be made against such proposals) then it should be feasible for each collection developer and each pre-order searcher, and any other qualified librarian, to spend a few hours each week selecting

titles from the cataloging backlog and making brief listed entries for the public access catalog.

There can be no argument about the fact that the user suffers the most from cataloging backlogs. It is encouraging that a large majority of the librarians who completed this survey believe that all backlogged titles should be brief listed in the public access catalog and that few of them are willing to limit access by accepting the finality of a brief listed record. On the whole, they would probably agree that the more access points a title has, the better off the user is. On the other hand, very limited access is far better than no access at all and that is the situation of most library users regarding backlogged materials, whether they are aware of it or not. In analyzing the responses to the question concerning the presence of backlogged titles being represented in the public access catalog, it can be deduced that possibly as many as nine OhioLINK libraries have brief listed entries in the public catalog for at least parts of their backlogs. Some of these brief listed titles are a default result of integrated acquisitions systems. But, what about the titles that were backlogged prior to the installation of such systems? In many cases, these titles will probably not be added to the public catalog until full cataloging is done. This means that the library user will not have access to thousands of titles, and as Ocran stated in the Preface to her research, "It does not seem to make any good sense to spend so much money acquiring books which do not get cataloged until the information in them become [sic] dated."[18]

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[18]Ocran, [v].

The technical services director of the largest academic library in Ohio pointed out that users of that library have had "very few backlog complaints...this is true because when searching for known items [in the online catalog], users are accustomed to finding minimal-level-type, though not *catalog*, records for items that are on order or in processing and asking that a "save" be placed on them."[19]

It appears that the general library user has absolutely no physical access to backlogged materials. Shelving space in highly visible public areas is limited in many libraries, but perhaps libraries should consider shelving backlogs in public access locations. Any materials which would be general circulation items after cataloging could be tattle-taped, marked with ownership stamps, and shelved in these open areas for public browsing. "Real" call numbers would not be necessary for these titles, but only some sort of accession number linking them to the brief records in the public access catalog. As users identified titles they wished to check-out, these materials could be circulated based on each particular library's established procedures for such materials.

It is encouraging to realize that catalogers and collection developers demonstrate the same level of awareness on most issues concerning cataloging backlogs. It is discouraging that there is not more communication between them in determining what materials should be immediately cataloged and what materials can be completely

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[19]William J. Crowe, "Local Needs, Shared Responsibilities," Journal of Academic Librarianship 11, no. 6 (January 1986): 338.

discarded because they are no longer pertinent to the collection or have become completely outdated.

Only two OhioLINK libraries were not represented in the survey responses. From those fifteen libraries which were represented, only one librarian reported that there was no cataloging backlog. It can be concluded that cataloging backlogs are a reality, in smaller or larger degrees, in most OhioLINK libraries, and they should be a serious concern to every librarian, especially in this era of shared access and resources. After all the online retrieval systems are perfected and all library users can access the entire collections of other libraries, the backlogged title may frequently remain a valuable but non-retrievable and inaccessible item. It is time to re-examine their existence in terms of controlling their content and accessibility.

A clear message has emerged from this study: Librarians responsible for uncataloged backlogs are unaware of the content and scope of these collections. Many more detailed surveys would need to be done to prove or disprove this hypothesis. Whether those studies will be done is the decision of those librarians concerned about the backlog situation in OhioLINK libraries and the possible impact it will have on the realization of OhioLINK goals.

As with any research, other questions have been raised. Are librarians willing to take the time, as limited as it may be, to struggle with this problem and attempt to get more exacting control of it? Is the philosophy of access to which librarians ascribe being fulfilled?

As the reality of OhioLINK comes closer, the time may be coming closer as well for catalogers to hold round table discussions and share their methods of processing and backlogging with each other. Do those catalogers who manage relatively small or no backlogs have something to share with others who are struggling with very large backlogs? Should collection developers discuss these backlogs and try to determine ways in which they can help relieve the situation? Can these two groups, working together, solve some the problems presented to the themselves and the user by the presence of these collections of uncataloged materials? How much duplication exists wihtin and among the backlogs now held by these libraries? Discussion may be worth the effort.

The editor of Journal of Academic Librarianship stated in an editorial on bibliographic access, "With the growing availability of powerful computer systems, we have before us an unparalleled opportunity to imporve by a quantum leap our ability to support the information needs of the library users."[20] How librarians deal with the existing backlogs and manage their growth in the future may determine how successful they are in taking full advantage of this opportunity.

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[20]Richard M. Dougherty, "Editorial: Bibliographic Access: an Unparalleled Opportunity," Journal of Academic Librarianship 11, no. 6 (January 1986): 331.

Appendix A

School of Library Science
Kent State University
Kent, Ohio 44242

Date

_____
_____
_____

Dear _____:

As an employee of the University of Akron's Bierce Library, I have watched with increasing interest the development of OhioLINK. Of particular interest have been Cataloging and Collection Development aspects. I am currently completing course work at Kent State University, School of Library Science. I have selected as my research topic, "Cataloging Backlogs: Their Content and Control -- A Survey of Collection Developers and Catalogers in OhioLINK Libraries."

I believe that cataloging backlogs will become critically important as the goal of sharing OhioLINK resources is actualized. For future planning purposes it would be beneficial to determine the size and content of existing backlogs, the library's processing priorities, and the extent of Cataloger's and Collection Developer's involvement, and perceptions. Two identical surveys are being sent to each OhioLINK library: one to the Cataloging Department and one to the Collection Development Department. This mailing is being sent to you as the most appropriate representative for [department]. If you believe the questionnaire can best be completed for [department] by another person in your organization, please forward this package to that person.

There are three basic issues addressed in this survey:

1. Are the contents and characteristics of the cataloging backlogs known? If so, who knows: technical service personnel, collection development personnel, the user?
2. Who decides cataloging priorities?
3. What is the level of accessibility and control of the backlog?

A questionnaire and a list of definitions are attached. Please complete the survey and return it to me within two weeks. Since the results of the survey rely on your perceptions of the cataloging backlog and related issues at your library, I request that you do not discuss the questions with your colleague until both surveys have been returned. I would appreciate your returning the survey to me, even if you choose not to take part in this survey.

I assure you that all responses will be kept totally confidential. All identifying links will be destroyed as soon as I have recorded receipt of the completed document. I plan to have the results of the survey published in the ALAO Bulletin; if this does not happen, you will be advised personally of the results. I thank you for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

(Ms.) Onadell J. Bly

Appendix B

School of Library Science
Kent State University
Kent, Ohio 44242

Date

_____
_____
_____
_____

Dear _____:

Your response is important! On February 9, 1991, I mailed to you a packet containing a cover letter, a list of definitions, a questionnaire, and a self-addressed, stamped envelope pertaining to my graduate school research on "Cataloging Backlogs: Their Content and Control -- A Survey of Collection Developers and Catalogers in OhioLINK Libraries." I requested return of the questionnaire within two weeks, in any state of completion. As of this date, I have not received your questionnaire.

Enclosed you will find second copies of the list of definitions, the questionnaire, and another self-addressed, stamped envelope. I request that you return the questionnaire to me within one week, even if you choose not to complete it. I understand that Ohio librarians, particularly, have been overburdened with questionnaires and forms during the last two years. However, I believe only fifteen minutes of your time will be needed to complete my survey. In fact, it is important that your responses be based on your perceptions and beliefs concerning your library's backlog and not on hard statistical data, which may or may not exist.

Please complete the questionnaire yourself or forward it to another colleague who is directly involved in [department] procedures. Allow me to re-emphasize that your responses will be totally confidential.

Thank you again for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Onadell J. Bly

Enclosure

Appendix C

QUESTIONNAIRE

The responses on this survey represent ____ Cataloging ____ Collection Development.

Complete the following questions based on your knowledge of current procedures in your library.

1. Check all current methods of acquisition. If possible, indicate the percentage of total acquisitions each method supplies.
   a. ___ Firm orders (i.e., faculty/patron/librarian requests) (___%)
   b. ___ Gifts (____%)
   c. ___ Approval Plan(s) (____%)
   d. ___ Memberships/standing orders/blanket orders (___%)
   e. ___ Exchange (____%)
   f. ___ Other (____%)

2. This library is a depository for U.S. Government documents.
   a. ___ All b. ___ Some c. ___ None

3. If the answer to number 2 is ***All*** or ***Some***, GPO documents have been represented in the public access catalog since _____ (year).

4. A brief listed entry is made in the public access catalog for all titles which are backlogged.
   a. ___ Yes b. ___ No
   c. ___ Selectively -- Please explain:_____
   _____
   _____
   _____

5. Indicate the shelving location of the backlogged titles.
   a. ___ In the cataloging department
   b. ___ In closed stacks in another part of the library
   c. ___ Off-campus
   d. ___ In a public access area for retrieval by the user.

6. How many titles are currently in the cataloging backlog, including brief listed titles?
   a. ___ 100 to 500 titles b. ___ 500 to 1000 titles
   c. ___ 1000 to 2000 titles d. ___ 2000 to 5000 titles
   e. ___ More than 5000 titles f. ___ I have no idea.

7. What is the age of the majority of the titles in the backlog?
   a. ___ The majority of the titles are relatively current imprints: 1985-1990.
   b. ___ The majority of the titles are older imprints: pre-date 1985.
   c. ___ There is no predominance of imprint among the titles in the backlog.
   d. ___ I have no idea of the age mix of the backlogged titles.

8. If ***a*** or ***b*** was indicated in number 7, it is
   a. ___ A rough estimate
   b. ___ A measured amount determined by _____
   _____

9. Who decides what materials will be backlogged? Check all applicable responses.
   a. ___ Catalogers
   b. ___ Collection developers
   c. ___ LC/OCLC (i.e., decision depends on availability of appropriate copy in OCLC).
   d. ___ Other _____

10. Which receipt type is most likely to be backlogged?
   a. ___ Firm orders (i.e., faculty/patron/librarian requests) (___%)
   b. ___ Gifts (____%)
   c. ___ Approval Plan(s) (____%)
   d. ___ Memberships/standing orders/blanket orders (___%)
   e. ___ Exchange (___%)
   f. ___ Other (____%)

11. Of the following which are most likely to be backlogged?
   a. ___ Government documents
   b. ___ Audio visual materials (any subject)
   c. ___ Computer software (any subject)
   d. ___ Periodicals and other serially published, non-monographic materials
   e. ___ Foreign language materials (any format)
   f. ___ Materials in the following subject areas (please list):

   _____ _____
   _____ _____
   _____ _____
   _____ _____

12. A written policy exists which outlines those titles which should receive immediate/priority cataloging and should **never** be backlogged.
   a. ___ Yes b. ___ No

13. If the response to 12 is ***No***, an unwritten policy exists which outlines those titles which should receive immediate/priority cataloging and should **never** be backlogged.
   a. ___ Yes b. ___ No

14. If the answer to either 12 or 13 above is ***Yes*** indicate what types of materials these are:
   ___ Rushes (any format)
   ___ Reference materials
   ___ Audio-visual materials
   ___ Computer software
   ___ Serials [i.e., periodicals, journals, annuals, etc.] (any format)
   ___ Monographic standing orders
   ___ Subjects _____ _____
   _____ _____
   _____ _____
   _____ _____

15. Materials are selected from the backlog for cataloging based on the following criteria:
   a. ___ First in first out
   b. ___ Requested by user
   c. ___ Imprint year
   d. ___ Last in first out
   e. ___ Language
   f. ___ A scheduled recycle through OCLC; based on the results of the search, titles are either cataloged or returned to backlog
   g. ___ Other - please explain:

   _____
   _____

For the following, if you believe a statement to be generally true at your library, Circle *T* for True; if you believe the statement to be generally false at your library, circle *F* for false.

1.	T	F	Catalogers can be relied upon to determine which materials should receive priority cataloging and which materials can be backlogged.
2.	T	F	No title remains in the backlog for more than one year.
3.	T	F	Minimal level cataloging is used by this library as an alternative to full cataloging in selected cases.
4.	T	F	The cataloging backlog is well-organized.
5.	T	F	Titles in the backlog are easily retrieved.
6.	T	F	Generally, the cataloging backlog does not create a problem for library users.
7.	T	F	The cataloging backlog is so large that it must be accepted that some titles may never be cataloged.

After reading the following statement, circle *A* if you agree or *D* if you disagree.

1.	A	D	Based on their knowledge of the existing backlog, collection developers should evaluate the likelihood that materials will be cataloged before they order them.
2.	A	D	Collection developers should evaluate the value of a title before original cataloging is performed.
3.	A	D	If a collection developer assigns very low cataloging priority to a title, it is an indication that the title should not have been purchased/kept in the first place.
4.	A	D	The existence of a large backlog could inhibit the capability of a collection developer in making appropriate selections for new purchases.
5.	A	D	All titles which do not have full Library of Congress copy or easily edited help copy ***should be*** brief listed in the public access catalog.
6.	A	D	Of those titles brief listed in the public access catalog, only those requested by a user ***should*** receive full cataloging.
7.	A	D	If a backlogged title can be identified and retrieved from the backlog, it does not matter that it may never be cataloged.
8.	A	D	With the exception of pre-identified priority items, the goal of the cataloging should be to catalog as many titles as possible, regardless of what will be backlogged.

Appendix D

List of OhioLINK Libraries Surveyed

Bowling Green State University
Case Western Reserve University
Central State University
Cleveland State University
Kent State University
Medical College of Ohio
Miami University
Northeast Ohio Universities College of Medicine
Ohio State University
Ohio University
Shawnee State University
University of Akron
University of Cincinnati
University of Dayton
University of Toledo
Wright State University
Youngstown State University

Appendix E

Definition of Terms

All terms suffixed by an asterisk (*) are defined according to The ALA Glossary of Library and Information Science.[21]

Approval plan*: An arrangement by which a publisher or wholesaler assumes the responsibility for selecting and supplying, subject to return privileges, all publications, as issued, fitting a library's collection profile specified in terms of subjects, levels, formats, prices, languages, etc. Some approval plans provide for the library to receive advance notification slips rather than the publications themselves.

Backlog: A collection of uncataloged materials. See the definition of **uncataloged materials** below.

Blanket order*: A plan by which a publisher or wholesaler agrees to supply to a library with one copy of all publications, as issued, within the specified limits of the plan, generally without return privileges.

Brief listing: A listing in the public access catalog representing an in process/uncataloged title. The only access points are author and title. Publisher and date may be added for clarification.

Cataloged materials*: Any library materials which have been assigned classification numbers and full subject headings as appropriate for the material] in the catalog of a collection, library, or group of libraries.

Cataloger*: A librarian who performs descriptive and/or subject cataloging and may also perform such related tasks as classifying, shelflisting, etc.

Closed stack*: Any library stack area not open to the general public or open only on a selective basis.

Collection developer*: A librarian whose responsibilities encompass a number of activities related to the development of the library collection, including determination and coordination of selection policy, assessment of needs of users and potential users, collection use studies, collection evaluation, identification of collection needs, selection of materials, planning for resource sharing, collection maintenance, and weeding.

Copy cataloging*: The cataloging of a bibliographic item by using an existent bibliographic record and altering it as needed to fit the title in hand and to conform to local cataloging practice.

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[21]Heartsill Young, ed., ALA Glossary of Library and Information Science (Chicago: American Library Association, 1983), various pages.

Firm order*: An order placed with a dealer specifying a time limit for delivery and a price which must not be exceeded [usually within specified limits] without the customer's prior approval.

Gift: An item given to a library for no remuneration.

Membership: An arrangement with a society or other organization through which a library receives all or specified publications at a set annual fee.

Minimal level cataloging: The limitation of the bibliographic description to those data elements considered by a library or other cataloging agency to be essential to the identification of bibliographic items. This level of cataloging is consciously done to certain types of materials to speed up the cataloging process. Cataloging records created at this level are intended to be the permanent records for the titles they represent.

Public access catalog: Any catalog, online, card file, or COM, which is used by the patron to access information on library holdings.

OCLC (Online Computer Library Center): A shared bibliographic database headquartered in Dublin, Ohio. All materials cataloged by the Library of Congress, the British Library, and over 6,000 member libraries worldwide are stored in this database.

OhioLINK: Ohio Library Information Network. A proposed network of state-supported academic libraries in the state of Ohio.

Online*: Equipment or devices directly connected to and under the control of the central processing unit of a computer.

On-order/in-process file*: An acquisitions file of bibliographic items from the time they are ordered until cataloging and physical processing have been completed.

Open stack*: Any library stack area to which library users have unrestricted access. Compare with **closed stack**.

Original cataloging*: The preparation of the bibliographic record of a bibliographic item without recourse to an existing record for the identical item.

Public access location: See open stack.

Uncataloged materials: For the purposes of this survey, materials which have never received full cataloging, as described in **cataloged materials** , or minimal level cataloging, as described in **minimal level cataloging**. **Brief listed** titles which may be accessible in the library's public access catalog by author and title only are to be considered **uncataloged materials**.

User: See user group.

User group*: The members of the library target group and others who actually use the collection or services of the library. [Because this study is concerned specifically with the collection manager's/developer's knowledge of the cataloging backlog, it is important to specifically include these librarians in the definition of "user group."]

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